

In the Claims:

Please cancel Claims 1, 10, 11, and 13. Please rewrite Claims 2-7, 12, 14-15, 22, and 24-26 and add Claims 27-31 in their entirety as follows (the changes in these Claims from the previous version to the rewritten version are shown in Appendix B, with brackets for deleted matter and underlines for added matter):

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- sub 2* 2. (Amended) The invention of claim 27 wherein said seal is one-piece.
3. (Amended) The invention of claim 27 wherein said seal is plastic.
4. (Amended) The invention of claim 27 wherein said seal is flexible.
5. (Amended) The invention of claim 27 wherein each of said first and second members have respective diameters of approximately a same respective value, and each of said first and second members respective splined portions have a respective length of about three times said value of said respective diameter of said first member.
- B₂* 6. (Amended) The invention of claim 27 wherein said first and second splined inner-portions of said seal are fit around at least a part of the respective splined portions of said first and second members utilizing initial preload force.
7. (Amended) The invention of claim 27 wherein said clamp comprises a spring within at least one of said first and second splined inner-portions of said seal providing preload force towards at least one of the respective splined portions of said first and second members.
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- sub 2* 12. (Amended) The invention of claim 27 wherein said first splined inner-portion of said seal is air-tightly fit around at least a part of the splined portion of said first member, and the second splined inner-portion of said seal is air-tightly fit around at least a part of the splined portion of said second member.
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Sub 62 14. (Amended) The invention of claim 27 wherein said first and second members of said shaft and said first and second splined inner-portions of said seal are generally cylindrical.

15. (Amended) A seal for a double-tube splined shaft, said seal comprising:

a first splined inner-portion having a first diameter; and

B₁ a second splined inner-portion having a second diameter, wherein said first diameter of said first splined inner-portion of said seal is larger than said second diameter of said second splined inner-portion of said seal, and said first and second splined inner-portions of said seal are each adapted to be slidably fitted around at least a part of splined portions of separate respective tubes of a double-tube telescopically resident splined shaft.

Sub 62 22. (Twice Amended) A method of attaching a seal to a shaft comprising:

providing a shaft comprising first and second members each having splined portions, said second member being telescopically resident within said first member, said splined portion of said first member cooperating with said splined portion of said second member thereby allowing said first and second members to cooperatively form the shaft;

B₅ providing a seal comprising a first splined inner-portion having a first diameter, and a second splined inner-portion having a second diameter, wherein said first diameter of said first splined inner-portion is larger than said second diameter of said second splined inner-portion;

slidably fitting the first splined inner-portion of said seal around at least a part of the splined portion of said first member; and

slidably fitting the second splined inner-portion of said seal around at least a part of the splined portion of said second member.

Sub C2 > 24. (Twice Amended) The invention of claim 22 further comprising the step of providing a spring within at least one of said first and second splined inner-portions of said seal, said spring providing preload force against at least one of said respective splined portions of said first and second members of said shaft.

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25. (Twice Amended) The invention of claim 22 further comprising the step of providing a clamp, wherein at least one of said first and second splined inner-portions of said seal is fitted to at least one of said splined portions of said respective first and second members of said shaft with the clamp.

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Sub C2 > 26. (Amended) The invention of claim 27 wherein said first member is adapted to couple with a transmission of the vehicle, and said second member is adapted to couple with a differential of the vehicle.

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Sub C2 > 27. (New) A combination of a seal and a shaft, comprising:

a shaft including first and second members each having splined portions and end portions, said second member being telescopically resident within said first member, said splined portion of said first member cooperating with said splined portion of said second member thereby allowing said first and second members to cooperatively form the shaft;

a seal including an outer surface, an inner surface, a bottom portion, and a top portion, wherein said inner surface includes a first splined inner-portion, a second splined inner-portion, and an intermediate section, wherein said first splined inner-portion and said second splined inner-portion are substantially parallel with each other;

wherein said first splined inner-portion is located proximal to said bottom portion and adapted to couple with said first member splined portion, said second splined inner-portion is located proximal to said top portion and adapted to couple

with said second member splined portion, and said intermediate section is located in between said first splined inner-portion and said second splined inner-portion and adapted to couple with said first member end portion; and

a clamp adapted to secure said first splined inner-portion of said seal to said splined portion of said first member.

28. (New) The invention of claim 27 wherein said second splined inner-portion is defined by an annular lip, said annular lip located substantially proximal to an axial end of said seal.

29. (New) The invention of claim 28 wherein said annular lip is adjacent to said first member.

30. (New) The invention of claim 27 wherein said first splined inner-portion, and said second splined inner-portion include inwardly-projecting splines extending in the axial direction along said inner surface of said seal.

31. (New) The invention of claim 15 wherein said first splined inner-portion, and said second splined inner-portion include inwardly-projecting splines extending in the axial direction of said seal.

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(canceled)